

**STATE OF MICHIGAN**  
**COURT OF APPEALS**

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In the Matter of CHRISTOPHER NORMAN  
GRAHAM, Minor.

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FAMILY INDEPENDENCE AGENCY,  
  
Petitioner-Appellee,

v

BECKY GRAHAM,

Respondent-Appellant.

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In the Matter of JOSEPHINE GRAHAM, Minor.

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FAMILY INDEPENDENCE AGENCY,  
  
Petitioner-Appellee,

v

BECKY GRAHAM,

Respondent-Appellant.

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In the Matter of WHITNEY GRAHAM, Minor.

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FAMILY INDEPENDENCE AGENCY,  
  
Petitioner-Appellee,

v

BECKY GRAHAM,

UNPUBLISHED  
September 15, 2005

Nos. 260745  
Kent Circuit Court  
Family Division  
LC Nos. 03-052366-NA

No. 260746  
Kent Circuit Court  
Family Division  
LC No. 03-052552-NA

No. 260747  
Kent Circuit Court  
Family Division

Respondent-Appellant.

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In the Matter of JUSTINA GRAHAM, Minor.

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FAMILY INDEPENDENCE AGENCY,

Petitioner-Appellee,

v

BECKY GRAHAM,

Respondent-Appellant.

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No. 260748  
Kent Circuit Court  
Family Division  
LC No. 03-052554-NA

Before: Smolenski, P.J., and Murphy and Davis, JJ.

PER CURIAM.

Respondent appeals as of right from the trial court order terminating her parental rights to the minor children under MCL 712A.19b(3)(c)(i) and (g). We affirm.

The trial court did not clearly err in finding that the statutory grounds for termination of parental rights were established by clear and convincing evidence. MCR 3.977(J); *In re Trejo*, 462 Mich 341, 356-357; 612 NW2d 407 (2000). Christopher, who was then eleven years old, was removed from respondent's care after she failed to pick him up for three days after being notified he had been arrested for shoplifting. The original petition also cited alleged medical and educational neglect and domestic violence. The three girls were left in respondent's care for a few months but were then removed following the filing of an amended petition that also alleged respondent failed to turn in drug screens and allowed cocaine, marijuana, and alcohol use in front of the children.

After all of the children were removed, respondent did make substantial efforts to comply with her parent-agency agreement. She attended all visits except for one, which was missed because of her mother's death. She completed three parenting classes, two psychological evaluations, individual counseling, budget tutoring, a substance abuse assessment, most drug/alcohol tests, and homework assigned by the caseworker. However, after more than fifteen months of services, respondent had difficulty managing the children's behavior. She did not effectively discipline the children or meet their emotional needs. When the children were sad or acted out, they usually were left to fend for themselves, would comfort each other, or were assisted by Josephine, the oldest child who often assumed the parental role. Respondent failed to provide appropriate meals to her children during her supervised visits, contrary to the requirements established for visitation, and would not follow the instructions and suggestions of the caseworker and parenting instructor. While respondent argues that the support available to

her could and would adequately make up for these problems, the record supported the trial court's assessment that the children would still be at risk in her care. She had failed to even make sure that the children attended school and took their medications. While the case was pending, she failed to attend most of Christopher's therapy sessions and assisted Josephine in skipping school. She continued to have problems with emotional stability and possibly substance abuse. A parent must not only participate in services, but must benefit sufficiently so that the children can safely be returned home. *In re Gazella*, 264 Mich App 668, 676-677; 692 NW2d 708 (2005). Respondent failed to benefit sufficiently from the numerous services in which she participated so that the children could be safely returned to her care.

Further, the evidence did not show termination of respondent's parental rights to be clearly contrary to the children's best interests. MCL 712A.19b(5); MCR 3.977(J); *Trejo, supra* at 356-357. The children loved their mother and were bonded to her. However, the evidence showed that concern over their placement and respondent's lack of progress was negatively affecting the children's well-being. The children need a permanent, safe, stable home, which respondent cannot provide. We find no clear error in the trial court's determination on the best interests issue.

Affirmed.

/s/ Michael R. Smolenski  
/s/ William B. Murphy  
/s/ Alton T. Davis